



# East Central Idaho News

BONNEVILLE, BUTTE, CLARK, CUSTER, FREMONT, JEFFERSON, LEMHI, MADISON & TETON COUNTIES

## ECONOMIC TRENDS

The Idaho Falls Metropolitan Statistical Area posted an unemployment rate of 2.9 percent for November as total employment decreased by 180 people over the month and the total number of people unemployed increased by 110. However, compared to the same time last year, almost 3,000 more people were employed in the MSA and 270 fewer people were unemployed. Although the unemployment rate was two-tenths of a percentage point higher than the previous month, it was six-tenths of a percentage point lower than the same time last year as noted in the East Central Idaho Table 1.

Idaho Falls, the largest city in the MSA, increased three-tenths of a percentage point from the previous month, but decreased six-tenths of a percentage point from the same time last year to end with a 3.2 percent unemployment rate. The MSA continues to show continued growth both in residential and commercial components of the economy.

Several variables were factors in the changes that took place over the month and year. Over the month, construction employment declined as colder temperatures settled in and the real estate season slowed. Rains added to the construction slowdown as the ground became too wet for large machinery and trucks. Precipitation averaged higher than normal during November. Retail stores also boosted employment to ready themselves for the holiday season, showing an increase of more than 200 employees. Year-over-year, more significant changes were noted in business support and professional businesses. These businesses alone accounted for almost half of the 2,800 new jobs. Health services increased as the flu and cold season started and doc-

East Central Idaho Table 1: Idaho Falls MSA Labor Force & Employment  
Bonneville and Jefferson counties

	Nov 2005*	Oct 2005	Nov 2004	% Change From	
				Last Month	Last Year
<b>INDIVIDUALS BY PLACE OF RESIDENCE</b>					
<b>Seasonally Adjusted</b>					
Civilian Labor Force	59,720	59,790	57,030	-0.1	4.7
Unemployment	1,700	1,590	1,970	6.9	-13.7
% of Labor Force Unemployed	2.9	2.7	3.5		
Total Employment	58,020	58,200	55,070	-0.3	5.4
<b>Unadjusted</b>					
Civilian Labor Force	59,840	60,050	57,210	-0.3	4.6
Unemployment	1,520	1,340	1,750	13.4	-13.1
% of Labor Force Unemployed	2.5	2.2	3.1		
Total Employment	58,330	58,710	55,470	-0.6	5.2
<b>JOB BY PLACE OF WORK</b>					
<b>Nonfarm Payroll Jobs** - NAICS</b>	52,704	52,910	49,890	-0.4	5.6
<b>Goods-Producing Industries</b>	7,430	7,950	7,050	-6.5	5.4
Natural Resources & Mining	50	50	50	0.0	0.0
Construction	4,140	4,670	3,850	-11.3	7.5
Manufacturing	3,240	3,230	3,150	0.3	2.9
Food Manufacturing	1,090	1,070	1,050	1.9	3.8
Fabricated Metal Product Manufacturing	210	230	220	-8.7	-4.5
Machinery Manufacturing	150	150	160	0.0	-6.3
Other Manufacturing	1,790	1,780	1,720	0.6	4.1
<b>Service-Providing Industries</b>	45,260	44,960	42,840	0.7	5.6
Trade, Transportation & Utilities	12,650	12,340	12,400	2.5	2.0
Wholesale Trade	3,800	3,710	3,860	2.4	-1.6
Retail Trade	7,200	6,980	7,020	3.2	2.6
Utilities	50	50	50	0.6	0.6
Transportation	1,600	1,600	1,470	0.0	8.8
Information	1,080	1,090	1,090	-0.9	-0.9
Financial Activities	2,000	2,000	1,920	0.0	4.2
Professional & Business Services	9,200	9,100	7,940	1.1	15.9
Educational & Health Services	6,630	6,590	6,320	0.6	4.9
Leisure & Hospitality	4,820	4,930	4,430	-2.2	8.8
Other Services	1,810	1,800	1,990	0.6	-9.0
Government Education	3,530	3,480	3,480	1.4	1.4
Government Administration	3,540	3,630	3,270	-2.5	8.3

\*Preliminary Estimate

\*\*Full- or part-time jobs of people who worked for or received wages in the pay period including the 12th of the month

tor's offices offering more specialized services were being sought in the area. Tourism related businesses also showed a healthy increase as a result of more marketing touting the area and more activities being offered. Government jobs increased with the need for snow removal and road maintenance and construction jobs increased from continued growth in subdivisions and commercial construction. The only notable decrease year-over-year was in other services .

## AREA DEVELOPMENTS

### Bonneville County

- Bonneville Joint School District 93 in the Ammon, Iona and Ucon areas finalized school boundary changes to deal with a growing school-age population. At this point, high school students affected by new boundary changes will be grandfathered so they can choose to remain at their current schools, but boundary changes will be enforced in the middle and elementary schools. Two elementary schools are under construction and will open this fall. Rimrock Elementary School is located on East 21<sup>st</sup> South which runs parallel to Sunnyside Road after it passes Crowley Road. Woodland Hills Elementary School is located on 49<sup>th</sup> Street, south of Hillcrest High School. Another elementary school is proposed in the center of the district in several more years. Officials hope that the changes in elementary school will ease overcrowding at the middle schools. Elementary schools will now house kindergarten through sixth grade and middle schools will only include seventh and eighth grades. Previously, middle schools included sixth grade. While District 93 is growing, Idaho Falls School District 91 is slowly experiencing a decline in its student population.

### Jefferson County

- The Idaho Migrant Council plans to open a low-income clinic this month in Roberts. The council recently opened clinics in Idaho Falls and Blackfoot. All three branches will be funded by a \$1.95 million grant from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. Rexburg also has a branch that is only open one day a week and is operated by a non-profit organization with volunteers, but it will apply for federal grants soon with a goal to make it a full-time branch. The branches are available to anyone struggling with medical bills. Patients pay reduced fees for services calculated on a sliding scale based on income and the family's situation. The clinics' goal is to keep fewer people from showing up at emergency room with illnesses that could have been prevented. Family medicine, mental-health services, vaccines, physicals and women's services, along with preventative medical care, are all offered at the clinics. Two larger hospitals in the area provided letters in support of the council's grant application since it will help to alleviate some of the indigent care that has to be written off. Eastern Idaho Regional Medical Center wrote off \$193 million this past year to charity, indigent, uninsured and under-insured services.

- Anna Inc., an engineering and architectural services company based in Annapolis, Md., won a \$30 million contract with the Idaho National Laboratory's Battelle Energy Alliance. The company has set up an office in Idaho Falls. Anna has more than a decade's worth of experience in the commercial nuclear power industry, and it will service Battelle over the next five years. New jobs will be created when tasks are assigned to the company but the number is unclear at this point. The goal is to use local resources in staffing the office since the area contains a large pool of talent.
- Taylor Crossing on the River is focusing on social needs this year for its Idaho Falls development on the Snake River. Plans call for construction of a reception center by the river and condominiums. McNeil Development, the development partner in Taylor Crossing on the River, announced it will tear down most of the old Army Surplus Store behind Smitty's Restaurant and construct an extended-stay hotel. The development's ninth building is currently under construction, which is about halfway towards the developer's goal. Waterfalls and landscaping, along with the themed buildings continue to draw in new businesses and customers.

### Madison County

- The city of Rexburg put up an ice-skating rink at the Municipal Golf Course. Residents can enjoy ice skating lessons and open skating for a low fee. The rink will remain open as long as weather permits. A cross county ski trail is also ready for use for a low fee at the golf course. The city is also planning activities involving Global Positioning Systems and a boot hockey league. The activities are available at a low cost because of a Nordic program that is offered through the Parks and Recreation department. The program is directed by Gabe Cheriton, who implemented it while interning with the city department. Cheriton is now a full-time employee for the department.

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